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**WHITE SHARK MONITORING EFFORT COORDINATED BY
*MARINE FISHERIES***

Department of Fish and Game Commissioner Dave Peters and members of his agency, the Division of Marine Fisheries (*Marine Fisheries*) are leading a multifaceted effort to monitor and study a free-swimming white shark (*Carcharodon carcharias*) in a salt water pond off Cape Cod. The shark is believed to be female, 14-feet long and estimated at 1,700 pounds and was first spotted on Tuesday. Concerned with conservation and public safety issues, *Marine Fisheries* is joined in its efforts to return this animal to the open ocean by experts from NOAA Fisheries officers from the Office of Environmental Law Enforcement.

Greg Skomal, *Marine Fisheries*' leading shark researcher, has been on-site observing the animal's behavior and coordinating the effort. Skomal successfully tagged the shark with a high-tech tag yesterday, which will record valuable movement patterns and oceanographic information. Such information should contribute to what is known about the biology and ecology of this great fish. Programmed to release in April, the tag will begin transmission of recorded data via a satellite when it reaches the water's surface.

Federal rules prohibit the taking of white sharks. Due to the rare occurrence of such fish in coastal waters, the Commonwealth of Massachusetts issued an emergency regulation effective September 23rd to complement these federal rules. The state regulations further prohibit the attempt to harvest such fish in state waters.

Commonly known as a Great White shark, white sharks are more common in deeper waters of the continental shelf but are known to enter shallower coastal waters. White sharks are common to temperate waters throughout the world's oceans and the occurrence of a solitary individual in Massachusetts waters is not surprising.

The white shark is an apex predator with no known predators of its own, except humans. As with much of the life history of white sharks, little is known about their reproductive biology. Most sharks display slow growth and small brood sizes.